

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. - 4. (Cancelled).

5. (Previously Presented): An image capturing device, comprising:

a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and

a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the clamping circuit comprises two or more clamping circuit sections, and

the control circuit controls such that a larger number of clamping circuit sections operate within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element than in another period.

6. (Original): The device according to claim 5, wherein

the clamping circuit comprises two or more clamping circuit sections which respectively have clamping capabilities at different levels, and

the control circuit controls such that a clamping circuit section at a higher level operates within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element while a clamping circuit section at a lower level operates in another period.

7. (Currently Amended): ~~The device according to claim 3, wherein~~

An image capturing device, comprising:

a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and

a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the control circuit controls such that the clamping capability within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes higher in level than the clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the clamping circuit comprises two or more clamping circuit sections, and

wherein the control circuit controls such that a larger number of clamping circuit sections operate longer within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element than in another period.

8. (Currently Amended): ~~The device according to claim 3, wherein~~

An image capturing device, comprising:

a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and

a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the control circuit controls such that the clamping capability within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes higher in level than the clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the clamping circuit comprises two or more clamping circuit sections which respectively have clamping capabilities at different levels, and

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping circuit section at a higher level operates longer within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element than in another period.

9. (Currently Amended): ~~The device according to claim 4, wherein~~  
An image capturing device, comprising:  
a solid image capturing element;  
a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain  
an image signal;  
a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal  
generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and  
a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping  
circuit;  
wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability  
attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid  
image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in  
another period;  
wherein the control circuit controls such that the clamping circuit  
operates longer within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the  
solid image capturing element than in another period; and  
wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping circuit section  
operates, within a predetermined period after image capturing by the solid image  
capturing element is started, in a period which is longer by an amount  $\Delta L$  than a  
period  $L$  in which the clamping circuit section operates in another period.

10. (Currently Amended): ~~The device according to claim 9, wherein~~  
An image capturing device, comprising:  
a solid image capturing element;  
a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain  
an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and  
a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the control circuit controls such that the clamping circuit operates longer within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element than in another period; and

wherein the control circuit controls such that the amount  $\Delta L$  remains constant within a predetermined period after commencement of image capturing by the solid image capturing element.

11. (Currently Amended): ~~The device according to claim 9, wherein~~

An image capturing device, comprising:

a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and

a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid

image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the control circuit controls such that the clamping circuit operates longer within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element than in another period; and

wherein the control circuit controls so as to reduce the amount  $\Delta L$  within a predetermined period after commencement of image capturing by the solid image capturing element.

12. (Original): An image capturing device, comprising:

a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level;

a control circuit for controlling such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period; and

a detection circuit for measuring an inoperative period during which the solid image capturing element suspends image capturing,

wherein

the control circuit controls such that the clamping capability within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes higher in level than the clamping capability attained in another period, and controls such that the clamping capability becomes higher in level with respect to a longer inoperative period.

13. (Original): The device according to claim 12, wherein

the control circuit controls such that the clamping circuit operates longer within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element than in another period, and controls such that the clamping circuits operates longer with respect to a longer inoperative period.

14. (Original): The device according to claim 12, wherein

the clamping circuit comprises two or more clamping circuit sections, and

the control circuit controls such that a larger number of clamping circuit sections operate within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element than in another period, and controls such that a larger number of clamping circuit sections operate with respect to a longer inoperative period.

15. (Original): The device according to claim 12, wherein

the clamping circuit comprises two or more clamping circuit sections having different levels of clamping capability, and

the control circuit controls such that a clamping circuit section at a higher level operates within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element while a clamping circuit section at a lower level operates in another period, and controls such that the clamping capability becomes higher in level with respect to a longer inoperative period.

16. (Currently Amended): ~~The device according to claim 3, An image capturing device, comprising:~~  
a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and

a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period;

wherein the control circuit controls such that the clamping capability within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes higher in level than the clamping capability attained in another period; and further comprising:

a buffer circuit for outputting a predetermined reference voltage; and

a switch connected between the buffer circuit and a signal line connected to an output terminal of the sold image capturing element, for switching between in an on state and in an off state, and

wherein

the control circuit controls the clamping capability by changing a period in which the switch remains in an on state.

17. (Currently Amended): An image capturing device, comprising:

a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;



a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and

a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period; and

further comprising:

a plurality of buffer circuits for outputting a predetermined reference voltage;

a selector for selecting at least one of the plurality of buffer circuits;

a switch connected between the buffer circuit selected by the selector and a signal line connected to an output terminal of the ~~said~~ solid image capturing element, for switching between in an on state and in an off state,

wherein

the control circuits controls the clamping capability by changing either a type or a number of the buffer circuit selected by the selector.

18. (Currently Amended): An image capturing device, comprising:

a solid image capturing element;

a driving circuit for driving the solid image capturing element to obtain an image signal;

a clamping circuit for clamping a reference level of the image signal generated by the solid image capturing element at a predetermined level; and

a control circuit for controlling clamping capability of the clamping circuit;

wherein the control circuit controls such that a clamping capability attained within a predetermined period after start of image capturing by the solid image capturing element becomes different from a clamping capability attained in another period; and

further comprising:

a plurality of buffer circuits for outputting a predetermined reference voltage;

a selector for selecting at least one of the plurality of buffer circuits;

a switch connected between the buffer circuit selected by the selector and a signal line connected to an output terminal of the ~~sold~~ solid image capturing element, for switching between in an on state and in an off state,

wherein

the control circuits controls the clamping capability by changing at least one of a period in which the switch remains in an on state, a type of the buffer circuit selected by the selector, and a number of the buffer circuit selected by the selector.